

# The Venerable Master as I Knew Him

## 我所認識的上人

Spoken by Bhikshu Jin Gong at the Buddha Hall of CTTB on June 6, 2014

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BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

Venerable Master, great assembly, all good and wise knowing advisors. I am Jin Gong, here to share my recollections of the Venerable Master. Much time has passed since I last heard the Venerable Master speak, so I hope you will be tolerant if my memory is inaccurate or incomplete.

**He was very hard working.** He traveled from San Francisco to CTTB every week so he could speak the Dharma in both places. He also traveled around often to Los Angeles. And he made many long trips to Asia to spread Buddhism. The great assembly used to walk around CTTB during the circumambulation part of evening ceremony. One evening while walking and reciting, we saw the Venerable Master sweeping the streets with a broom.

上人、大眾和各位善知識，我是近恭，今晚跟各位分享一些我跟上人的故事和一些想法。因為上次聽上人講話已經是很久以前，如果記憶中有不確實或遺漏的地方，請大家原諒並指正。

上人是一位非常用功的人。他每個星期都會往返三藩市和萬佛聖城之間，所以能夠在兩處說法開示，他也經常會到洛杉磯去講法，並長途跋涉去亞洲弘法。在萬佛聖城做晚課時，大眾經常都會到外面繞念。有一天晚上，當我們在繞念時，看到上人拿掃把掃萬佛聖城的街道。

上人是一位非常知足的人。以前我有一輛77年的美國黃蜂車，這輛車跟另一輛美國小精靈的車很相似，而這輛車有可能是世界上最爛的車。但是每次我用這輛破車載著他時，他看起來都非常滿意。當上人在無言堂二樓



**He was content.** I used to own a 77 AMC Hornet. This car was a close relative to the AMC Gremlin and perhaps one of the worst cars ever made. But the Venerable Master seemed perfectly content to be driven by me in this old car. When he lived upstairs in the Wordless Hall building, I went to his room once to change the fluorescent light tubes. He had a small plain room with a simple bed.

**He was frugal.** When he traveled back and forth between CTTB and San Francisco, he would never use the air conditioning but only open the car windows if it was too hot. He would even take an extra person along to drive toll free across the Golden Gate Bridge because of the carpool exception.

I once had an office in the Administration Building. I needed some extra work space, so I piled up some old cinder blocks and put old metal partitions on top to make a table. When the Venerable Master came by my office one day and saw this crude table, he was delighted. He broke into a big smile and said: "This is how we do things at CTTB: We use what we have."

And now I must confess that I have been acting against the wishes of the Venerable Master. He often told us not to praise him. So I will talk a bit about the world vision of the Venerable Master.

Once I was part of a group of the Venerable Master's disciples that went to the San Francisco airport to see him off on his travels. As we waited at the airport, the Venerable Master told us that we were wasting time just sitting around waiting for his plane to depart. He told us to leave and go back to Gold Mountain Monastery and do some useful works. So perhaps the best way to honor the Venerable Master is not to praise him but to help carry out his vision.

Now I have another confession to make. Even though I studied under the Venerable Master for 20 years, I am not

住時，有一次我去他的房裏幫忙換日光燈管，他住在一間很平常的小房間，裏面只有一張很簡單的床。

上人是一位非常節儉的人。當他往返三藩市和萬佛聖城時，在車上他從來都不開冷氣；如果天氣實在太熱，他只會開車窗。爲了省下金門橋的過橋費，他會車上多載一個人。

以前我在行政大樓有一間辦公室，因為需要更多的工作空間，所以我把一些舊空心磚疊起來，上面放幾片舊鐵隔板做成一張桌子。有一天，上人到我工作的地方，看到這張粗陋的桌子，他很高興然後開心地笑著對我說：「我們在萬佛聖城就是這樣做事：就地取材，物盡其用。」

可是現在我必須承認，我做了違背上人心願的事。他經常告訴我們，不要稱讚他，所以我將要分享一些上人的世界觀。

有一次，我和上人的弟子們到三藩市機場去送機。當大夥兒在機場等飛機時，上人說我們是在浪費時間，光坐在機場等他的飛機起飛。他要我們回金山寺，做些有意義的工作。因此，恭敬上人的最好方式，也許不是去稱讚他，而是去幫忙實踐他的理想。

我還要承認另一件事情。雖然在上人座下學習了二十年，但我實在不夠資格去詮釋他弘揚佛教的志願，我只能給各位一些提示。至於要如何實現上人的志願，就要靠你們用自己的智慧去決定。

上人希望我們和其他的宗教交流。身為佛教徒，我們並不指望世界上所有的人都成為佛教徒，而是希望大家能夠按照真理去做事。所以我們和其他宗教領袖聚會在一起，並且很善巧地介紹一些新觀念給他們，或者幫他們重新發掘所信仰的清淨善根。







we are skillful we can introduce new ideas to them or help them to rediscover the original pure roots of their own faith.

He wants us to promote Buddhist education. Educating the Sangha is very important so that we can effectively spread the Dharma. Providing Buddhist education classes is also important. We want to help everyone learn more about Buddhism and get more benefit from the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Now if we are to teach we need to teach by example as well. So we can try to be like the Venerable Master: hard working, content and frugal. I think the Venerable Master wants us to spread Buddhism far and wide. We are translating sutras into English, but this is only the start. We can translate sutras into every language.

Now this is harder than it seems. There are about 7,000 languages in the world today. But the Bible has been translated into over 2,500 languages. Now we have all vowed to save all living beings no matter how difficult it is we have vowed to do this.

Now many people may think, "I never met the Venerable Master while he was alive. I would like to learn about him and find out what he was like." Now the Venerable Master inhabited a human body, and that human body died. But his hopes for us and his hopes for spreading Buddhism did not die. His guiding spirit did not die. It still remains with everyone who shares his vision. When he entered nirvana, he did not abandon us. Rather he passed on the responsibility for spreading Buddhism to everyone who remained in this world. So everyone still has the opportunity to draw close to the Venerable Master. We can draw close to the Venerable Master by sharing in his vision, sharing in his work, and sharing in his principles. Amitofo!

qualified to explain his plans for spreading Buddhism. I can only offer some hints about this. It will be up to you to use your own wisdom to decide how to carry out the Venerable Master's plans.

He wants us to reach out to other religions. Now as Buddhists, we do not seek to have everyone in the world call themselves Buddhist. Instead we seek to have everyone act according to true principles. So we can join together with leaders of other religions, and if

上人希望我們提倡佛教教育。僧伽教育是非常重要的，這樣我們才可以有效地弘揚佛法。開設佛教課程也很重要，我們希望幫助每個人多了解佛法，並從釋迦牟尼佛的教導中受益更多。

要教化人，我們必須以身作則，我們可以學著像上人做一個很用功、知足而且節儉的人。我認為上人希望我們能將佛教發揚光大，所以我們把佛經翻譯成英語。但這只是一個開始，我們還需要將佛經翻譯成每一種語言。

當然，實踐這個理想說比做來得容易，因為現今世界上大約有七千種語言，而《聖經》已經翻譯成超過兩千五百種語言了。既然我們都發願要度一切眾生，不管多麼艱苦，我們都要實行這個願望。

有很多人可能想：「上人在世時，我從沒見過他，我希望能多了解他是怎麼樣一個人。」雖然上人的肉身不在，但是他對我們的期望以及對弘揚佛法的期望依然存在；他的精神沒有死，依然與每一位跟他有共同理想的人同在。他雖然入涅槃，但是他並沒有捨棄我們，而是把弘揚佛法的責任傳遞給世間上的人。因此，每個人依然有機會親近上人，只要追隨上人的志願、上人的工作、上人的宗旨，我們和上人就是咫尺天涯。阿彌陀佛！

